

Call for papers

Symposium on

African agriculture and the continental free trade area (AfCFTA)

Opportunities, Issues and Challenges

18-19 June, 2020, Nairobi, Kenya

Organized by

The African Association of Agricultural Economists - AAAE

The African Association of Agricultural Economists (AAAE) is pleased to invite submissions for a symposium to be organized in Nairobi in June 2020. The theme of the Symposium is Agriculture and the African Continental Free trade Area – Opportunities, Issues and Challenges. The symposium will include oral paper presentations and invited presentations.

Background

The decision to launch the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) project was taken during the 18th Ordinary African Union Summit held in January 2012 in Addis Ababa. After a long negotiation process and three discussion forums, the agreement establishing the AfCFTA was signed in Kigali on 21 March 2018. At the Niamey Summit on the 7 July 2019, the African leaders launched the implementation phase of the agreement. The agreement provides a framework for trade liberalization in goods and services and is expected to create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of businesspersons and investments, and thus pave the way for accelerating the establishment of the Customs Union.

Once fully implemented, the AfCFTA is expected to cover all 55 African countries, with an estimated combined current GDP of US\$2.5 trillion, and a population of over one billion, 60 percent of whom are below the age of 25 years. In this context, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) project holds out the hope of realization of the continent's economic promise. It has the potential to raise Africa's low productivity and promote higher investment, thereby helping to increase income levels and reducing poverty. The IMF estimates that the AfCFTA will produce an increase in economic welfare for the continent as a whole of between 2 and 4 per cent, depending on how extensively and quickly its reforms are implemented.

The implementation of the AfCFTA offers exceptional conditions to further and accelerate the transformation of agriculture on the continent. Agriculture is still the backbone of many African economies, and the fate of African economies heavily depends on productivity growth within the farming sector. As such, agriculture remains Africa's surest bet for growing inclusive economies, raising income and creating decent jobs mainly for the youth.

On the other hand, the creation of the African continental free trade area is a vital instrument for economic growth and social progress on the continent. Therefore, AfCFTA should have agriculture and rural development as a prime building block. The agricultural sector would be the main engine for the implementation of the AfCFTA, but at the same time could be the main beneficiary of a successful implementation of the AfCFTA.

Although agriculture is expected to be one of the most positively impacted sector, liberalization alone will not lead to agricultural development. If agriculture is to realize its potential in the context of the new free trade environment, there are challenges that will need to be addressed. The proposed symposium intend to provide a platform for researchers and diverse group of experts to discuss the nexus between the recent free trade agreement and the African agricultural sector.

Aims and Scope

The objective of the symposium is to build capacity on the role and importance of the agricultural sector in the new environment and generate knowledge on requisite policies and measures for fostering the involvement and the development of the agricultural sector under the new continental free trade environment.

Issues expected to be addressed in the symposium include (but are not limited to):

- Free Trade area, and agricultural inputs market and agricultural production.
- AfCFTA and promotion of Regional value chains in Agricultural commodities.
- Subsidies, tariff and non-tariff barrier for agricultural commodities.
- Intra-African trade and food consumption in the context of AfCFTA.
- AfCFTA and other trade agreements (multilateral agreements, regional economic communities, bilateral trade agreement...).
- African agricultural market, Agricultural policies and institutions.

Paper submission guideline

Interested authors must submit their papers at the following email address: symposium2020@aaae-africa.org. We encourage the submission of policy-and-solution oriented papers with strong empirical work. We also encourage authors to submit full papers addressing the theme of the symposium. Authors can also submit an extended 2 pages abstract with the agreement that if selected, the full paper will be submitted before the symposium. Authors submitting papers must adhere to the key deadline dates as stated in Table below, and must follow the submission guidelines of the African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics (AfJARE) available at <http://afjare.org/authors-guide/>

Sponsorship

Authors of selected papers may be sponsored to attend and present their work at the symposium. The sponsorship will cover expenses (travel, accommodation subsistence) associated with their participation at the Symposium. Only one author per paper accepted for presentation will be eligible for sponsorship.

Expected Outputs and Outcomes

The outputs of the Symposium are expected to include:

- A Symposium Report/proceeding.
- Papers meeting the standards, will be published in a special issue of the African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics (AfJARE) - <http://afjare.org/>
- Publication of Policy/Research briefs.

KEY DATES

Annotation	Deadline date
Call for Papers	January 23, 2020
Deadline for submission of abstract or full paper	31 March 2020
Notification of acceptance of paper	April 30, 2020
Symposium Agriculture and AfCFTA	June, 18-19, 2020